

JOAN OF THE SWORD HAND

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Prince Wasp Stings.

Margaret did not answer her tormentor's taunt. Her arms were about Maurice's neck, and her lips, salt with tears, sought his in a last kiss. The officer of the Prince's guard touched her on the shoulder. She shook him haughtily off, and then, having completed her farewells, she loosened her hands and went slowly backward towards the further end of the hall with her eyes still upon the man she loved.

"So," cried Prince Louis, in the curiously uneven voice of a coward lashing himself into a fury, "you have played out your treachery upon a reigning Prince of Courtland. You cheated me at Castle Kernberg, you have made me a laughing-stock throughout the empire. You have shamed a maiden of my house, my sister, the daughter of my father. What have you to say ere I order you to be flung out from the battlements of the western tower?"

"Gentlemen and Princes," Maurice von Lynar answered, "that which I have done I have done for the sake of my mistress, the Lady Joan, and I am not afraid. Prince Louis, it was her will and intent never to come to Courtland as your wife. She would not have been taken alive. It was therefore the duty of her servants to preserve her life, and I offered myself in her stead. My life was hers already, for she had preserved it. She had given. It was hers to take. With the chief captains of Kernberg I plotted that she should be seized and carried to a place of refuge wherein no foe could ever find her. There she abides with chosen men to guard her. I took her place and was delivered up that Kernberg might be cleared of its enemies. Gladly I came that I might pay a little of my debt to my sovereign lady and liege mistress, Joan, Duchess of Kernberg and Hohenstein."

"Nobly perorated!" cried Prince Ivan, clapping his hands. "Right sonorously ended. But, listen, Sir Mummer, in all this there is no word of the Princess Margaret. How comes it that you loudly proclaim having given yourself a noble sacrifice for one fair lady, when at the same time you are secretly married to another? Are you a deliverer of ladies by wholesale? Speak to this point. Let us have another noble period—its subject my affianced bride. Already we have heard of your high devotion to Prince Louis wife. Well—next!"

But it was the Princess who spoke from where she stood behind the crossed swords of her guards.

"That I will answer. I am a woman and weak in your hands, princes both. You have set the grasp of rude men-at-arms upon the wrists of a Princess of Courtland. But you can never compel her soul. Brother Louis, my father committed me to you as a little child—have I not been a loving and faithful sister to you? And till this Muscovite came between you were you not good to me? Wherefore have you changed? Why has he made you cruel to your little Margaret?"

Prince Louis turned towards his sister, moving his hands uncertainly and even deprecatingly.

Ivan moved quickly to his side and whispered something, which rekindled the light of anger in the weakling's eyes.

"You are no sister of mine," he said; "you have disgraced your family and yourself. Whether it be true or not that you are married to this man matters little!"

"It is true; I do not lie!" said Margaret, recovering herself.

"It is the worse, then, and he shall

The Prince shrugged his shoulder and opened his palms deprecatingly.

"Madam," he said, "I shall be satisfied with twining your bodies. In holy Russia we are plain men. We have a saying, 'No one hath ever seen a soul. Let the body content you.' When this gentleman is—what I shall make him, he is welcome to any communion of spirits to which he can attain with you. I promise you that, so far as he is concerned, you shall find me neither exigent lover nor jealous husband!"

And the Prince of Muscovy laughed loud and long. But Prince Louis did not laugh. His eyes glared upon the prisoner like those of a wild beast caught in a corner when it wishes to flee but cannot.

"He shall die—this day shall be his last. I swear it!" he cried. "He hath mocked me, and I will slay him with my hand!"

He drew the dagger from his belt. But in the center of the hall the Sparhawk stood so still and quiet that Prince Louis hesitated. Ivan laid a soft hand upon his wrist and as gently drew the dagger out of his grasp.

"Nay, my Prince, he will give him a worthier passing than that. So noble a knight-errant must die no common death. What say you to the Ukraine Cross, the Cross of Steeds? I have here four horses, all wild from the steppes. This squire of dames, this woman-mummer, hath, as now we know, four several limbs. By a strange coincidence I have a wild horse for each of these. Let limbs and steeds be severally attached, my Cossacks know how. Upon each flank let the lash be laid—and—well, the Princess Margaret is welcome to her liege lord's soul. I warrant she will not desire his body any more."

At this Margaret tottered, her knees giving way beneath her, so that her guards stood nearer to catch her if she should fall.

"Louis—my brother," she cried, "do not listen to the monster. Kill my husband if you will—because I love him. But do not torture him. By the last words of our mother, by the memory of our father, by your faith in the Most Pitiful Son of God, I charge you—do not this devilry."

Prince Ivan did not give Louis of Courtland time to reply to his sister's appeal.

"The most noble Princess mistakes," he murmured, suavely. "Death by the Cross of Steeds is no torture. It is the easiest of death. I have witnessed it often. In my country it is reserved for the greatest and most distinguished. No common felon dies by the Cross of Steeds, but men whose pride it is to die greatly. We will show you to-morrow on the plain across the river that I speak the truth. It is a noble sight and all Courtland shall be there. What say you, Louis? Shall this springald seat himself in your princely chair, or—shall we try the Cross of the Ukraine?"

"Have it your own way, Prince Ivan!" said Louis, and went out without another word. The Muscovite stood a moment looking from Maurice to Margaret and back again. He was smiling his inscrutable Oriental smile.

"Let the Princess pass," he cried. The guards dropped their swords to their sides. Instantly the Princess Margaret ran forward with eager appeal on her face. She dropped on her knees before the Prince of Muscovy and clasped her hands in supplication.

"Prince Ivan," she said, "I pray you for the love of God to spare him, to let him go. I promise never to see him more. I will go to a nunnery. I will look no more upon the face of day."

"That, above all things, I cannot allow," said the Prince. "So fair a face must see many suns—soon, I trust, in Moscow and by my side."

"Margaret," said the Sparhawk, "it is useless to plead. Do not abuse yourself in the presence of our enemy. You cannot touch a man's heart when his breast covers a stone. Bid me good-by and be brave. The time will not be long."

Like a child after its bedside prayer she lifted up her face to be kissed.

"Good-night, Maurice," she said, simply. "Wait for me; I shall not be long!"

She laid her brow a moment on his breast. Then she lifted her head and walked slowly and proudly out of the hall. The guard fell in behind her, and Maurice von Lynar was left alone with the Prince of Muscovy.

As the door closed upon the Princess a sudden devilish grimace of fury distorted the countenance of the Prince Ivan. Hitherto he had been studiously and even caressingly courteous. But now he strode swiftly up to his captive and smote him across the mouth with the back of his gauntleted hand.

"That!" he said furiously, "that for the lips which have kissed hers. To-morrow I will pay the rest of my debt. Yes, I will pay it with usury there-to!"

A thin thread of scarlet showed upon the white of Maurice von Lynar's chin and trickled slowly downwards. But he uttered no word. Only he looked his enemy very straightly in the eyes, and those of the Muscovite dropped before that manful regard.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Ukraine Cross.

Upon the green plain beside the Alla a great multitude was assembled.

They had come together to witness a sight never seen in Courtland before, the dread punishment of the Ukraine Cross. It was to be done, they said, upon the body of the handsome youth, with whom the Princess Margaret was in love—some even whispered married to him.

At ten a great green square of river-side grass was held by the archers of Courtland. The people extended as far back as the shrine of the Virgin, where at the city entrance travelers were wont to give thanks for a favorable journey. At eleven the lances of Prince Ivan's Cossacks were seen topping the city wall. On the high bank of the Alla the people were craning their necks and looking over each other's shoulders.

Through the lane by which the gate communicated with the tapestried stand apart for the greater spectators, the Princes Louis and Ivan, fool and knave, servant and master, took their way. And they had scarce passed



"The Ukraine cross."

when the people, mutinous and silent, surged back behind the archers' guard. "Back there—stand back! Way for their excellencies—way!"

"Stand back yourselves," came the growling answer. "We be free men of Courtland. You will find us no Muscovite serfs, and that or the day be done. Karl Wendelin, think shame—thou that art my sister's son—to be aiding and abetting such heathen cruelty to a Christian man, all that you may eat a great man's meat and wear a jerkin purged with gold."

Thus angrily ran the taunt and jeer, till the Courtland guard, mostly young fellows with relatives and sweethearts among the crowd, grew well-nigh frantic with rage and shame.

"See yonder! What are they doing? Peter Altmaier, what are they doing? Tell us, long man! Of what use is your great fathom of pump-water? Can you do nothing for your meat but reach down black puddings from the rafters?"

At this all eyes turned to Peter, a lanky, overgrown lad with a keen eye, a weak mouth and the gift of words.

"They are bringing up four horses from the Muscovite camp. The folk are getting as far off as they can from their heels," began Peter Altmaier, looking under his hand over the people's heads. "Half a score of men are at each brute's head. How they plunge! They will never stand still a moment. Ah, they are tethering them to the four great posts of stone in the middle of the green square. Between, there is a table—no, a wooden square stand like a priest's platform in Lent, when he tells us our sins outside the church."

"The Princes are sitting their horses watching. Bravo, that was well done. We came near to seeing the color of the Muscovite brains that time. One of the wild horses spread his hoofs on either side of Prince Ivan's head!"

"God send him a better aim next time! Tell on, Peter! Aye, go on, good Peter!"

(To be continued.)

New Danger to the Heron.

Surgeons have long been seeking for some material for sutures and ligatures which should be more satisfactory than those at present in use, which include catgut, kangaroo tendon, silk worm gut, horse hair and silver wire. Dr. Charles F. Kieffer has recently used and suggests in a medical journal that the tendons of the cranes and heron make excellent sutures and ligatures and seem to possess some advantages over the materials at present in use.

Should these suggestions be generally approved by physicians, birds of the heron group are threatened with a new danger, which naturalists and bird lovers will deplore. Some species of heron have already so greatly decreased in numbers that they are even thought to be on the verge of extinction, and all have become much less abundant than they formerly were. The herons are not prolific birds, the number of eggs in the nests being small. The danger which threatens this group is thus a very real one.—Forest and Stream.

Thought It Was a Cocktail.

Dinner was a little late. A guest asked the hostess to play something, and, seating herself at the piano, the good woman executed a Chopin nocturne with precision. After she had finished there was still an interval of waiting to be bridged. The grim silence she turned to an old gentleman on her right and said:

"Would you like a sonata before dinner?"

He gave a start of surprise and pleasure.

"Why, yes, thanks," he said. "I had a couple on my way here, but I think I could stand another."

KNOWWHATYOUBUY

You Can See Quality and Quantity in the Local Stores.

PAYS TO TRADE AT HOME

The Purchaser Must Take Mail-Order House Goods on Faith—Keep the Money of the Community at Home.

When the consumer buys merchandise he is interested in three things—quality, quantity and price. When he goes into the store of his local merchant he sees the goods that he is to pay for displayed before him; he can determine whether the quality is first-class, and whether the quantity is all that is claimed. These two points settled, he should have a fair idea as to whether the price asked is a fair one or not.

But how is it when he attempts to buy of the big mail order houses of the cities? The only guide he has to the quality and quantity they are offering is what the catalogue says, and the catalogue is prepared with the one object in view of selling the goods.

When the consumer buys of his local merchant and finds the goods he has purchased were not as represented he can promptly take them back and receive his money. When he buys of the mail order house in the large cities he has practically no recourse but to take what he gets and look pleasant at the results.

It is cheap goods and short weight that is making mail order house profits. They can buy but little, if

almost the exceptional order that is conducted on the theory that it is possible to take an inferior job and foist it on a credulous people by means of a reduced price and the honest reputation established by the meritorious original which it shamelessly caricatures. These methods have been crowned with success solely by reason of the fact that mail order houses put more skill, energy and money into advertising than do the manufacturers to whom the American people are directly indebted for the best vehicles on the face of the earth.

"The mail order business is the quack doctor of commerce. It promises much and guarantees nothing. The directions are always on the inside, and you have to buy a non-returnable package before you can find out what they are."

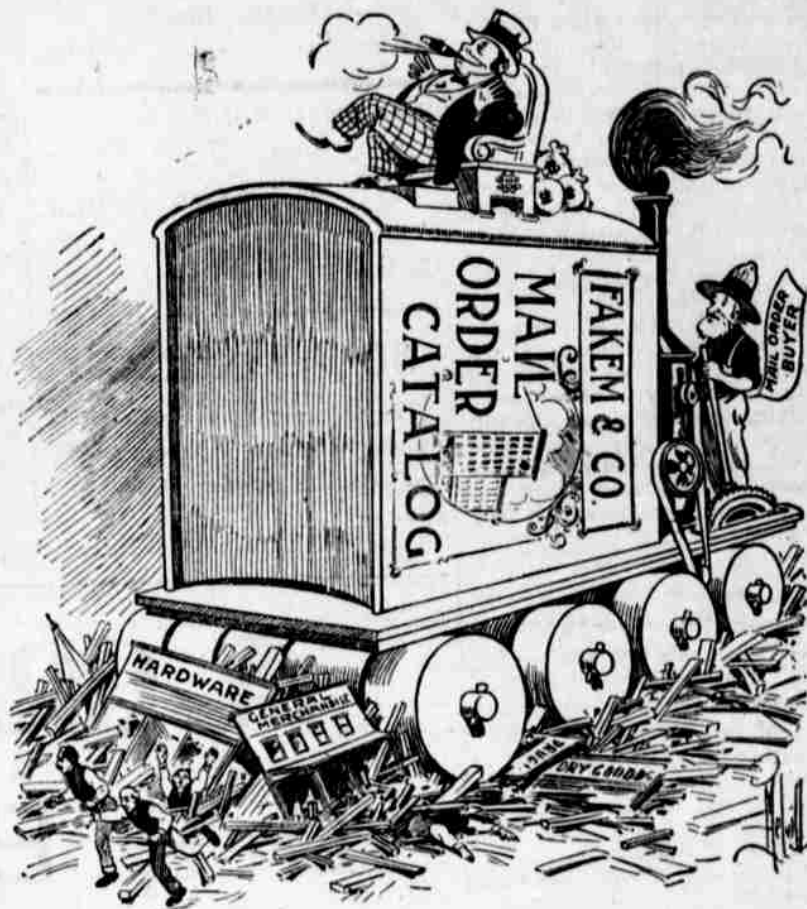
A. G. Enderton, of Walter, Okla., writing to the Shawnee, Okla., Union Signal, says:

"* * * The mail order houses are the worst offenders of the pure food law that we have to deal with. They are the people who use short weight tin cans and every year the American public is cheated out of thousands of dollars by this alone."

"* * * I see where some mail order houses offer paint at about what good oil is worth. Now, does anyone think that a mail order house can buy good paint stuff cheaper than anyone else?"

"Now suppose you find out what crude petroleum, like what is pumped out of oil wells cost. Very cheap, is it not? That is the oil that is used and what about the paint stuff? How about Spanish whitening, with just enough white lead to stick it together?"

The question of prompt delivery is another question which mail order house patrons should consider. It is filled promptly. The reason for this



The mail-order juggernaut is crushing the lives out of hundreds and thousands of local merchants, and hundreds of towns and villages as well. When you send a dollar to the mail-order house you are but operating the lever that keeps this death-dealing machine on the move.

any, cheaper than your local merchant can. First-quality, standard merchandise is manufactured on a very narrow margin of profit, but the mail order house can win and pay big dividends on enormous capital if they can sell to the people an inferior quality and short weight quantity of merchandise at the prices they ask. Your local merchant could do the same thing, but you would not buy the same goods of your local merchant that you buy of the mail order house at an equal price.

Here is an item clipped from the Parma, Mich., News which shows the nefarious system of the mail order concerns, and how they victimize their patrons:

"A farmer purchased two sacks of binding twine of a large Chicago catalogue house, and upon its arrival this morning a ball was unrolled and measured with a ball of Plymouth twine sold by local dealers, when it was found that the Chicago article was just 396 feet short of that sold at home. There being ten balls in a sack, it will be seen that the farmer lost 6,120 feet, or over a mile of twine on two sacks, by not buying at home. Then, too, the mail order house product was of an inferior quality, being full of knots, and one farmer standing near during the measuring process remarked that it would never work on a binder. Now we wish to ask you, does it pay to trade at home? If there is anyone who is skeptical of this story, just call and we will show you."—Parma, Mich., News.

Bankrupt stock, merchandise that reliable jobbers would not handle because of its poor quality, the refuse of the factories made over into cheap merchandise. These are the things the patrons of the mail order houses are buying. Here is an extract from an article that appeared in the Sioux Falls, S. D. Leader:

"The mail order house selling vehicles by the catalogue route, is more than a pirate, it is a turkey-buzzard. It takes the freaks and failures that have died for want of real merit, and tries to stifle legitimate business by selling the embalmed remains at a reduced price."

"The whole nefarious mail order system, in so far as it relates to vehicles,

delay is that they do not carry the goods in stock, and must purchase them after your order is received. In Chicago, for example, no mail order house will sell to any person living within the city limits, and the reason for this is that these concerns purchase a large amount of the merchandise they are selling from the retail stores of the city, the proprietors of which refuse to sell them the goods except upon the condition that they are not to sell to the people of the city."

Here is the wall of a mail order victim taken from the columns of the Crookston, Minn., Journal, which explains this point:

"Sir: I want to register my kick right here on catalogue houses and their misleading methods. I am frank to acknowledge that I have been duped to perfection. The only difference between me and the other victims being that I am a little deeper in and that I am willing to acknowledge the corn."

"To begin with, last fall I with her who is now my wife, decided to purchase some stuff to furnish our new home. Accordingly we ordered all our furnishings of a catalogue house two weeks prior to our marriage, which we thought would be plenty of time to get the goods around. But by the infernal planets let me tell you right here that all the correspondence diplomacy, appealing and pleading has succeeded in landing only a kitchen table and later a mirror from Pittsburg."

"Our honeymoon has been a very dramatic experience; cooking on an old gas plate, eating on a dry goods box, sleeping on the floor and borrowing a few necessary utensils of friends and neighbors. No more catalogue goods for us. We hope to get enough more goods by April 1 to celebrate all fool's day in a fitting manner."

"A VICTIM."

Mr. Consumer, it is to your advantage in many ways to buy honest goods at honest prices of your honest local merchant. See what you are buying. Get what you are paying for. Keep the money of the community in which you live at home, and build up your town instead of tearing it down for the benefit of the mail order houses of the big cities.

UTAH LEGISLATURE.

At the close of the fifteenth day of the present session of the house, sixty-six bills had been introduced.

Representative Dean has introduced a measure to prohibit bucket shops and bucket shopping within the state.

Representative Kuchler wants all goods made in the state prison and offered for sale to be plainly marked as prison-made goods.

House bill No. 27, Robinson, regulating ore purchases and prohibiting the making and publishing of false assays, has passed the house.

Senate bill No. 19, by Rasband, providing for emergency cages in case of accident in mines, was passed unanimously by the senate last week.

H. B. No. 53, by Randall, provides that all stockholders in mining companies shall have the right to inspect the property in which they are interested.

President Love appointed Senators Lawrence, Clegg, Hollingsworth, Johnson and Bullen as the senate portion of the joint coal shortage investigation committee.

Senator Rasband has introduced a measure prohibiting the use of the devices known as the "slot machine" in this state and providing a penalty for the violation of this act.

At the session of the house on the 29th, a resolution introduced by Representative Taft was adopted, inviting William J. Bryan to address the house during his sojourn in Salt Lake City.

Senator Benner X. Smith's bill inflicting the death penalty upon convicts in the state prison after having committed an assault with a deadly weapon, has been killed in the house.

A measure has been introduced by Representative Larson, making an appropriation for the improvement of existing roads and bridges and the construction of new roads and bridges in Emery county.

H. B. No. 58, by Martin Jensen, repeals chapter 29 of the law of Utah, 1899, which provides for the creation of a state institution of art and prescribes its manner of appointment, powers and duties.

H. B. No. 34, by Westphal, making owners of traction engines liable for all damages done by such engines to bridges or culverts, has received the approval of the members of the house and will probably become a law.

H. B. No. 15, by Kuchler, amending section 3367 revised statutes, 1896, relating to judgment and penalties in contempt of court, has passed the house. This changes the law so as to read three months, instead of five days.

A bill has been introduced by Representative Westphal to encourage the destruction of certain wild animals; providing bounties for the killing thereof, and providing the manner in which such bounties may be provided.

A committee from the house composed of Robinson, Hone and Tolton, has been appointed, in accordance with a resolution introduced by Robinson, to investigate the shortage of cars in relation to the transportation of coal.

H. B. 45, by Croft, changing the time of taking the school census in counties, and H. B. 47, changing the time of taking the school census in cities, were passed by the house last week. The bills change the time of the census from summer to spring.

The senate observed the last day of its work for the 3d week of the session by passing senate bill No. 15, by Hulaniski, making it a misdemeanor for any person to violate any of the laws of the state or any of the counties regulating the use of public highways.

Senate bill No. 28, by Johnson, regulating the practice of osteopathy in the state of Utah and to provide for a state board of examiners, and to license osteopaths to practice in this state, and punish violating the provisions of this act, has passed the senate.

Representatives Westphal, in a bill introduced in the house last week, proposes to amend the fish and game laws, one provision allowing the shipping of carp, mullets, suckers and chub, which is now prohibited, under the supervision of the county game warden, within the season provided for fishing.

Twelve bills fell into the house hopper on the 1st, including one proposing a constitution amendment. A thirteenth bill was offered, but Speaker Joseph, evidently being of a superstitious turn of mind, found a technical objection to it and thus saved the house from a horrible fate from the unlucky thirteen.

The Kuchler resolution providing for the prosecution of former officials and their bondsmen, to recover the amount of warrants illegally issued, has passed the house. This measure is the beginning of an attempt of the state to recover the money lost in the bounty frauds, for which some of the perpetrators are serving terms in the state prison.

The senate on the 31st passed three bills. They are senate bill No. 9, by Lawrence, providing for the payment of expert witnesses, senate bill No. 18, by Lawrence, authorizing the state university medical school to use unclaimed bodies; and senate bill No. 23, by Walton, allowing \$1,500 to A. E. Eastman, sheriff of Rich county, for injuries sustained while capturing an insane man.

Senator Seely believes a pound of butter should weigh sixteen ounces. When the housewife purchases a pound of butter she should not receive a package containing fourteen ounces, is his contention, and with this view he has introduced a bill regulating the manufacture and sale of butter.

The house passed two joint memorials, one asking President Roosevelt to rescind his order withdrawing coal lands from entry and another asking congress to pass the bill pensioning Indian war veterans of Utah.



"You are no sister of mine," suffer for it. At least I can hide—I cannot prevent your shame!"

"I will never give him up; nothing on earth shall part our love."

Prince Ivan smiled sweetly, turning to where she stood at the end of the hall.

"Sweet Princess," he said, "divorce I understand, contrary to your holy Roman faith. But in my land we have discovered a reader way than any papal bull. Be good enough to observe this"—he held a dagger in his hand. "It is a little blade of steel, but a span long, and narrow as one of your dainty fingers, yet it will divorce the best married pair in the world."

"But neither dagger nor the hate of enemies can sever love," Margaret answered proudly. "You may slay my husband, but he is mine still. You cannot twain our souls."